

Taught by Former CIA Official

# Students Take Plunge into Chinese

By JUDI BUEHRER  
SUN Staff Writer

FAIRFAX — Twenty-one high school seniors completed the first week of the Chinese Summer Institute Friday and expressed enthusiasm for the 6-week course — the only such course offered in the country in a public school system.

Dr. Cyde B. Sargent, director of the program, said that in developing the course he has "abandoned the traditional methods" of teaching and instead is using a more sophisticated approach typical in graduate schools.

DR. SARGENT recently retired from the Central Intelligence Agency. He has directed language and area studies concerning China and other Far Eastern countries for about 30 years.

The new technique is primarily used in the two hours of study each day devoted to the culture of the Chinese people. The first four class hours are spent in intensive study of the Mandarin dialect of the Chinese language.

Mrs. Chauan Ouyang Chau, a native of China and a language lecturer at Columbia University, teaches the written and spoken Chinese section.

DURING THE course, the students will be taught a basic conversational Chinese with the

use of Yale University's textbook on Chinese.

One student, Dan Whitaker, a senior at J.E.B. Stuart High School, said he thinks the language is the more challenging part of the course.

"It's fascinating. Our text book relates the characters to Roman letters and shows us how to speak and write them," Dan said.

"Some characters represent syllables, sometimes they are combined to represent words. The character is the idea and the tone of voice can change the meaning of the character," he said.

HE ILLUSTRATED with a word, *Mau*, which can either mean woman or horse, depending on the tone of voice.

"It's not as difficult as I thought it would be. The sentence construction and word order is much like English and is easier than I expected," Dan said.

Sandy Styer, a senior at W. T. Woodson High School, called the language aspect of the course "difficult because it requires concentration every minute."

She said the first week of the course has been "wonderful" and that "I'm amazed at some of the things we've covered so far."

Madelaine Delker, a senior at O'Connell High School, said she thought that learning the characters is the most difficult part of the course.

CONCERNING the history and culture studies, Madeleine said the techniques being used make the course "uncluttered" with dates and details. The emphasis is on the Chinese people and their deeply-embedded culture, she said.

Eighteen lecturers will visit the class during the summer to speak on various aspects of the Chinese people, history and culture.

Dr. Sargent said the theme of the institute is "Character and Personality of the Chinese People."

"This will include studying the human and natural factors that have molded the Chinese people's character and personality," Sargent said.

"The second aspect is how the character and personality are expressed in all aspects of Chinese civilization, such as social organization, the family, political concepts and organizations, and the arts, literature and philosophy," he said.

THERE ARE four objectives of the institute.

The first is the general objective of giving the students the

experience of learning the meaning of a culture that is very foreign to their own, Sargent said.

Understanding the character and personality is the second objective, followed by creating "an awareness of the importance of China — the largest world power today on the basis of population."

"Whether we like it or not, China is becoming a major power dominating U. S. foreign policy. It's my belief that it's criminally negligent not to educate the young people of the importance of China," he said.

The final objective will perhaps remain "unseen," Sargent said. That is, contributing to the values of others. "We may each find certain things characteristic of Chinese people that will be helpful to us."

IN ADDITION to the language and in-class studies, field trips will be conducted to the Library of Congress, the State Department, the Voice of America and other places where students can relate their classroom knowledge to people and events.

Two textbooks, "The Changing Society of China" and "Short History of the Chinese People" are being used in addition to the Yale language text. Outside readings will be recommended.

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mended to students.

"We've tried to design the course around a minimum amount of homework, about one-half hour per day," Sargent said.

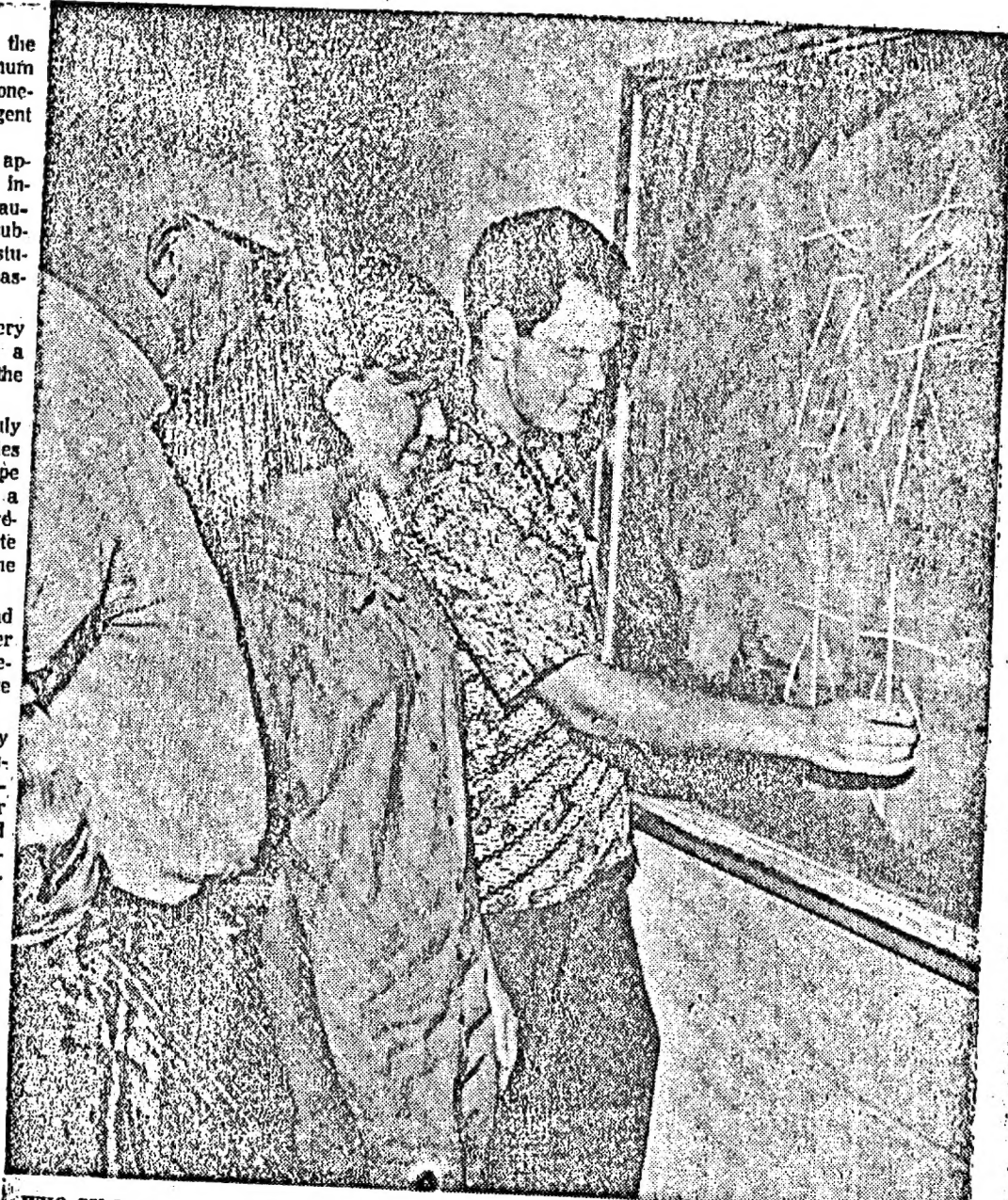
With the "sophisticated" approach being used in the institute and the "battery of authorities on various Chinese subjects," Sargent feels the student response has been increased.

"THE STUDENTS are very responsive and are showing a great deal of enthusiasm for the course," he said.

The institute will end on July 30 and "graduation" ceremonies are being planned. "We hope to have the students put on a Chinese skit. They will be presented some sort of a certificate to show they've completed the course," he said.

The County School Board had budget \$10,000 for the summer institute and a continuing three-hour per week language course next fall.

After a vote of disfavor by the Board of County Supervisors, the School Board compromised and approved the summer program but decided to withhold authorization of the fall program until they received an evaluation of the institute.



WHO SU LIN? — Su Lin is Chinese for Roger Sollenberger. Roger of 1287 Berry Place, McLean, is showing student Sandy Styer of 4204 Wakefield Drive, Annandale, how Su Lin is written in Chinese. Watching closely at the left is Dr. Clyde B. Sargent, director of the Fairfax Summer Institute on Chinese Language and Area Studies. (SUN Photo by Little)